



January 31, 2014

This week's edition includes important information I want to share with you:

- **Position Announcement:** Please join me in congratulating Debbie Posey as the new DIDD Protection from Harm (PFH) QA Analyst. She will be responsible for review and critique of selected investigation reports, conducting case file audits, trend analysis and other QA duties for PFH. Debbie has worked for DIDD since 1999 and has been with the PFH Unit for the last ten years. Her extensive experience will be invaluable in this position and the position itself is another example of the department's ongoing commitment to enhance its operations for the benefit of persons supported.
- **DIDD Assistive Technology (AT) Clinics Reorganization:** I am pleased to announce the addition of Deborah Poirier to the Office of Health Services in Central Office. Debbie began January 15 as the Director of Assistive Technology Services. Her position will support centralization of the three regional AT Clinics in order to ensure consistent best practice standards and operations across the state. Debbie has been the director of the DIDD Assistive Technology Clinic in Middle Tennessee for the past 11 years. She has comprehensive experience and credentials in evaluating and designing custom seating and positioning systems for persons with significant physical challenges, including being one of only three nationally certified Seating and Mobility Specialists in the state. Please take the opportunity to congratulate and welcome Debbie!
- **Background Checks:** A reminder that DIDD contracted providers should take steps to ensure that when engaging a company to perform background checks, the provider gives the company necessary information about DIDD requirements for the scope of the check. This is particularly important when a provider decides to change companies. Please make sure to provide the new company with DIDD requirements. Please note DIDD does not maintain a list of companies approved to conduct these checks. The Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (DCI) is the entity charged with licensing these companies. For further information about licensed companies, please reference this [site](#) or visit <http://verify.tn.gov/>.

Once the site is accessed:

- Select 3rd bullet for Insurance Division Information.
- Select the link to Regulatory Boards.
- Under Quick Links, click on Reports & Data.
- There will be instructions to register an account if one does not already exist. This must be done and there is no charge.
- Go to Downloadable Reports.
- Select the category for Regulatory Boards.
- Click on Private Investigators and Polygraph Commission (options will be available for Private Investigators and Private Investigator companies).

- **An Ounce of Prevention:** This week's focus is on the Protection from Harm system. We would like to remind providers that cooperation with DIDD Investigators during open investigations is a requirement in both the Provider Manual (Chapter 18, section 7.4) and the Provider Agreement (section A.13). Bringing investigations to a timely close benefits persons supported, providers and the department. Cooperation from many providers is excellent, but from time to time some issues arise. Some common concerns we encounter are staff not being available for interviews as necessary or staff failing to appear at the designated time and place for interviews. Additionally, the Incident Management Coordinator (IMC) or other management personnel should contact the witnesses and make scheduling arrangements, not the Investigator. Finally, we would like to remind providers that documents requested by the Investigator need to be provided in a timely manner.
- **Disability Day on the Hill:** On January 29, dozens of disability groups and advocates came to the Capitol to talk with their legislators and raise awareness for Disability Day on the Hill. DIDD Assistant Commissioner of Policy and Innovation Laura Doutre, spoke to a group in the House chambers about some of DIDD's accomplishments. She also discussed employment efforts and more information about the Supporting Families grant. We were happy to participate in such a wonderful event!
- **Employment Network:** Participants are still needed for a February 11 capacity building session regarding Employment Network and Ticket to Work from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m at Workforce Investment Network in Memphis (480 Beale Street). The session will provide an overview of the Disability Employment Initiative grant, Ticket to Work and partnering with a workforce that has already become an Employment Network. If your agency is interested in learning more about becoming an Employment Network and Ticket to Work, please RSVP to Amy Gonzalez at Amy.Gonzalez@tn.gov by February 7.
- **Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities:** The Council on Developmental Disabilities is an independent state office created through the federal [Developmental Disabilities Act](#). It is responsible for assessing services and implementing strategies to make disability programs and services in Tennessee more efficient and effective. Although the Council contracts with DIDD for certain administrative and human resource services, it is a separate agency from DIDD.

To stay updated about new projects, programs and general disability news from the Council, sign up for a monthly update through their website [here](#) or e-mail Emma Shouse, the Council's Director of Public Information, at Emma.Shouse@tn.gov to be added to their mailing list.

The Council also publishes a magazine called *Breaking Ground*, which covers a variety of disability-related issues in Tennessee. If you or your agency does not currently receive *Breaking Ground* and would like to, please e-mail Mildred.Sparkman@tn.gov. You can also view past issues on the Council's website [here](#).

- **Customized Employment Webinar:** Relias Learning and Griffin-Hammis Associates will host a free webinar on Customized Employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities on February 6 at 12 p.m. EST. During the webinar, participants will learn:
 - The typical application and interviewing process.
 - How to use a person-centered evaluative method to identify a person's vocational themes and how to use these themes to craft a job development strategy.
 - Tips to engaging small and/or artisanal businesses as opposed to big retailers.

To register, click [here](#) . If you have any questions, please contact the DIDD.ISQA@tn.gov help desk.

- **Employment Resources:** The Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) has successfully assisted agencies in various states to support persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment. WISE offers two types of online training that may benefit anyone interested in enhancing their employment efforts. First, is a webinar series. Each webinar is \$30 per session. However, agencies can have any number of people in one location watching it together. WISE encourages offices to purchase one seat and project the webinar on a screen for everyone to view. Click [here](#) to view the calendar of training events; WISE webinars are listed in blue.

On-demand trainings are also available through the Wise Learning Center; these are currently free (for a limited time) to anyone. To register for the learning center and access a course catalog, click [here](#). For more information on WISE and their current projects, please visit <http://www.gowise.org/> or follow them on Facebook or Twitter @Wisetraining.

- **Pneumonia and Influenza:** Although many types of pneumonia exist, there is one type that is prevalent in the population we support: aspiration pneumonia, a particularly dangerous threat. The topic of “Pneumonia: Signs and Symptoms/Strategies for Prevention” was presented in Protection from Harm provider meetings held statewide this month. A PowerPoint copy of the presentation is attached to this edition. Additionally, during this time of year, a serious concern is pneumonia caused by the influenza virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that seasonal flu activity is widespread in most of the country and will continue for several weeks. Health specialists advise that people can protect themselves from spreading the disease by reducing their stress levels, adequately resting and exercising, regularly washing their hands, ensuring they have a healthy diet and receiving flu vaccines. For more information about seasonal flu, please visit the CDC website [here](#).
- **Housing Foundation of West Tennessee:** The Housing Foundation of West Tennessee was established and funded pursuant to a court order in the case of *United States v. State of Tennessee* (Arlington litigation) as an independent, autonomous entity whose mission is to acquire, adapt, maintain, and lease safe, accessible, and affordable housing for eligible persons with intellectual disabilities residing in West Tennessee. Its programs will enhance access, opportunity and expansion of choices whereby eligible residents may experience affordable and decent housing options. The Housing Foundation of West Tennessee is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit and is driven by a five-member founding board of directors; two of the five members are DIDD employees. To learn more about the Housing Foundation, click [here](#) or contact Dexter Washington, Executive Director at (901) 322-6188.
- **DIDD Training Update:** Per Relias Learning, the course titled, *The Role of the Direct Support Professional* will be retired today. This course is currently part of the department’s DSP new hire 60-day curriculum. The new course, *Principles and Practices of Effective Direct Supports*, is accredited by The National Association of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). Relias has a system to ensure that a course within a curriculum is automatically replaced if the course is not completed. We will be checking next week to see if the new course automatically replaced *The Role of the Direct Support Professional* as part of the 60-day curriculum for anyone who did not complete it prior to today. This change will not affect any prior completions of *The Role of the Direct Support Professional* in CDS or Relias, but *Principles and Practices of Effective Direct Supports* will now be counted to meet the requirement after January 31.

As referenced in last week's edition, the SHARE function was turned on last week for all staff records. We recommend all agencies share the information on learner master accounts, along with the letter that was sent with *Open Line* last week. A recorded webinar session on the SHARE functionality is also available [here](#) for your convenience.

- **Helping Those Who Protect and Serve:** Habilitation and Training Services (HATS) of Gallatin recently assisted two local Sumner County Businesses, CORTAC and U.S. Pest to give Hendersonville Police a special gift. Hendersonville-based U.S. Pest has donated a piece of tactical equipment essential to a police officer's comfort underneath their body armor that is manufactured by Hendersonville-based CORTAC. The piece of equipment, called the CTAV™, is designed to go underneath an officer's body armor. Its lightweight design and air-filled chambers make wearing body armor much more tolerable. U.S. Pest is giving a CTAV to each of the roughly 121 sworn officers on their force. The CTAV normally costs an officer \$149.95. CORTAC is discounting their product by roughly 1/3 to aid U.S. Pest as part of the donation.

"We wanted to get this done as soon as we could because the temperatures are falling and these officers have had to get used to the uncomfortable reality of performing in the rigors of winter," said Michael Letterman, CEO of CORTAC. "Without companies like U.S. Pest Protection, this would not have been possible. It is refreshing to find civic-minded organizations that still care about those individuals that protect our homes, our businesses and our families. We



are also excited that Habilitation and Training Services (HATS) of Gallatin is part of our team! With the help of Betty, Dawn, Alonzo, Jason and Brian, we were able to assemble over 121 units in the space of 2 hours. The assembly is not altogether an easy process. But they made it seem simple. I am very glad HATS Executive Director, Ben Minnix, has taken such a personal role in helping to make this program a success!"

U.S. Pest and CORTAC delivered the CTAVs to the Hendersonville Police Department before Christmas. "What CORTAC has created solves a problem that has persisted for years: the discomfort in wearing body armor," said Hendersonville Chief of Police Mickey Miller. "For U.S. Pest to step up and purchase these on our behalf gives us a huge advantage in our ability to perform our daily duties."

- **National Association of Qualified Developmental Disability Professionals (NAQ):** The NAQ is an organization for professionals who serve people with disabilities. The purpose of this organization is to promote, protect and advance the interests of Qualified Developmental Disability Professionals (QDDPs, previously known as QMRPs). The NAQ continues to grow as a professional organization for disability professionals. The goals of this organization are:

- Promote an outcome-based approach to service delivery and the provision of supports for people with disabilities.
- Provide training in best and promising practices.
- Disseminate relevant information, including research findings, through its newsletter and annual conference.
- Engage in advocacy in the public interest.
- Make public statements consistent with its purposes.

Each year, the NAQ sponsors an annual conference that brings together QDDPs, case managers, program directors, executive directors and medical practitioners from across the United States. This year, the 2014 NAQ conference will be held in Nashville on August 5-8. For more information or to register, click [here](#).

- **Conflict Management/Dispute Resolution:** The Office of Customer Focused Services appreciates the 150+ DIDD stakeholders who participated in the accredited 4-hour Conflict Management/Dispute Resolution Basics course held in the Middle and West regions last week. Participant energy was incredible and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Numerous attendees requested the creation of a follow-up guidance course to allow for enhanced role-playing practice. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Michael Mailahn at (865) 320-2196. For those who attended the training on January 23 and did not receive their *Certificate of Attendance*, please e-mail Mike.Mailahn@tn.gov.

Be safe and have a great weekend!

~Debbie